A NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN,

by Tim & Angela DeForest

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MEMO:

DATE: October 18, 2483

FROM: Lars Anderssen, Town Attorney (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

Wow. Berch, you are right. I've done a careful reading of the Colonial Authority regulations. Yes, we are required to have someone on the Town payroll to oversee Law Enforcement activities, but there is nothing in either those regulations or the town charter that specifies those duties must be carried out by a Sheriff. We can indeed assign them to the Town Clerk, thus saving the price of the Sheriff's salary. This would fulfil the Law Enforcement requirements and still leave us qualified for Civic Improvement grants from the Martian Colonial Authorities.

Is it a good idea, though? The last three sheriffs were all killed in the line of duty, with two others quitting due to the pressures of the job. I've looked over the resume of the young man coming to Mars to take over as Town Clerk. He's got a Master's degree in Accounting and another in Town Planning, but I don't see anything that indicates any experience or training in Law Enforcement, unless you count his time on a Laser Tag team in college. But that seems to be a bit of a stretch.

If we make Algernon Fitzhugh the Sheriff as well as the Town Clerk, aren't we hanging a target on the poor sap's back?

Lars

MEMO:

DATE: October 18, 2483

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Lars Anderssen, Town Attorney (Town of Ares Landing)

Lars,

Please keep in mind that Algernon Fitzhugh will NOT be the Sheriff. He will be hired as Town Clerk, with Law Enforcement duties assigned to him *in addition* to the accounting and planning duties that the Clerk normally carries out. I know it sounds like I'm being picky over semantics, but it is very important to keep this distinction clear. We don't want to open any legal or administrative possibility of Fitzhugh being able to ask for additional pay or requisition equipment for the Sheriff's department. Only this way can we save significant funds from the town budget, which you know is stretched very thin after the Finnigan gang robbed several incoming trade caravans last year. Those deprecations severely reduced our tariff revenues. The civil war between the Martian Emperor and the Council of Annoyed Nobles might be largely confined to the other side of the planet, but it also adds to the disruption of trade. We need to save money wherever we can.

Yes, I do realize that Fitzhugh may not survive long in the job. I suppose to a human, that sounds a bit cold-hearted. But remember that my species lives for around 800 Earth years. (Or 425 Martian years as I *should* phrase it.—I DO wish you humans weren't so stubbornly provincial in how you keep time!) Having

held the position of Comptroller for several different colonial settlements on Mars over the last 200 years and having done the same for 150 years on my home world of Ganymede, I believe I have developed a realistic perspective regarding sentient life vs. budgetary concerns. It may be harsh, but Mars is a harsh planet.

Keep in mind that not only do we save on the salary and benefits we would have to pay a Sheriff, but the Life Insurance requirements for the Town Clerk are much lower. When Fitzhugh gets murdered, the insurance payout will be much less. And, as long as we don't overtly advertise the new Law Enforcement aspect of the Clerk's job, we shouldn't have much trouble replacing him.

Trust me on this, Lars. I know how to handle money.

Berch

LETTER FROM ALGERNON FITZHUGH TO BLAKELY FITZHUGH

DATE: October 23, 2483

Dear Uncle Blake,

Well, I've arrived on Mars and reached Ares Landing. It was a bit of a rough trip getting here. The rocket from Earth was actually a nice experience, but I guess the ongoing civil war has disrupted the immigration process. I spent three days at the Mon Olympus port before anyone was willing to stamp my passport and let me through. The room at the port hotel was quite expensive. The cost of the aircar trip out to Ares Landing was three times what I expected. I'm here and getting settled in the small apartment I had pre-leased, but these extra expenses have left me quite destitute until my first paycheck arrives.

There is a bit of a wrinkle with the new job. I met via video link with the Town Comptroller, a Ganymedian named Berch

something-or-other. He actually doesn’t live in Ares Landing, conducting all his duties remotely. And I think I know why. It’s too dangerous to actually live here if you don’t have to.

Ares Landing is a mess. The town depends on its livelihood by being at the end of the trade routes. During the summer months, caravans of twelve-legged beasts called Mirots arrive pretty much constantly, bringing in Power Crystals, Farkle Spice, Uni-Tiger pelts and other valuable goods. The town provides warehouse space for the merchants for a fee and collects tariffs on the goods when they are sold. Aircars then transport the goods to the larger Town markets.

All this I knew when I accepted the job as Town Clerk. But what I didn’t know was that outlaw activity has increased dramatically after the civil war began. Caravans are being raided and robbed on a regular basis and consequently, the town revenues are down. The crime rate within the town has soared.

It turns out that Ares Landing has a hard time keeping a Sheriff on its payroll. They keep getting killed or simply giving up and quitting. This is where the situation becomes personally uncomfortable.

Mr..... FlargNefarn, I think (I might be spelling that wrong), has told me that the duties of the Town Clerk now include Law Enforcement. I was somewhat stunned when told this and might have stammered a bit when I asked if I was being appointed Sheriff.

Mr. ... FlargNafarn? was very insistent that I am NOT the Sheriff, but still simply the Town Clerk, with the same pay and benefits originally agreed upon. The Law Enforcement responsibilities were simply being transferred from the Sheriff to the Clerk.

I must say that I was very annoyed by this and expressed my annoyance to Mr. FlorgNarfen? in the strongest possible terms. But he was quite adamant about these new duties being a required part of the job.

This is definitely NOT what I signed up for. But, Uncle Blake, I've *got* to take the job. it's not just that Mr. FlarNalren? pointed out a line in the contract I signed on Earth that reads "The Clerk may also be assigned additional appropriate duties by the Town Comptroller." But also, I am indeed destitute. I can't *afford* to turn down the job. In fact, the only reason I have food in my cupboard is that I was able to get credit at the store dependent on my next paycheck.

It is worrisome to me that I had to sign an agreement with the store to allow them to settle my tab via my Town Life Insurance if I'm not alive next payday.

With trepidation,

Your Nephew Algernon.

EDITORIAL FROM THE *ARES LANDING OBSERVER*:

DATE: October 24, 2483

Well, there's a new Sheriff in town. Except he's not the Sheriff. It seems that our Esteemed Comptroller has made yet another questionable decision. Rather than hire another new Sheriff (and I will grant that it was becoming difficult to find someone willing to take the job), our Esteemed Comptroller has assigned all Law Enforcement activities to the new Town Clerk, a mousy-looking and bespectacled fellow named Algernon Fitzhugh. This reporter found Mr. Fitzhugh unpacking some belongings in the Clerk's office this morning and asked him what his qualifications were for carrying out the duties of Sheriff. Mr. Fitzhugh stammered quite a bit as he explained that he is apparently *not* the Sheriff and is as yet uncertain how he will actually carry out the duties of an office he does not actually hold.

This reporter later stopped by Zorth's Watering Hole to gauge the reaction of the public. The current odds are 236 to 1 that Mr. Fitzhugh won't live long enough to collect his first paycheck.

MEMO

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

DATE: November 2, 2483

Mr. Fitzhugh,

Regarding your requisition for parts to repair the robot designated Deputy F-7, I'm afraid I'm going to have to deny you funds. Please keep in mind that this robot is the property of the Sheriff's Department. As Town Clerk, you are not authorized to spend money on equipment designated for another office.

I understand that the trouble-shooting portion of the robot's manual did allow you to complete partial repairs on Deputy F-7 yourself, though it walks with a severe limp and its A.I. seems to have deteriorated somewhat. I suppose the decade or so it has been stored in the basement at Town Hall has not done it much good. (I'll have to place a retroactive letter of rebuke in the files of former Sheriffs for failure to take proper care of their assigned equipment.)

So, much as you are allowed access to the Town Jail and whatever equipment might be on hand there, you can make use of the robot if it proves to be at all useful in its current condition. Just keep in mind that funds for repair are NOT forthcoming. Please do what you can to keep the robot and any other Sheriff's Department equipment from suffering any further damage. Remember, in the strictest technical sense, this equipment is the responsibility of another department and you must be sure to take particular care with it.

On the other hand, I am able to approve your requisition for ink cartridges for the printer in the Clerk's office and for a new

electronic stylus. I will have to turn down your request for a new chair. Money is tight and you can learn to live with the constant squeaking.

In the future, please be careful to spell my name correctly on requisition forms. It is FlargNefern, with two *e's* in the latter half of the name.

Yours Truly,

Berch FlargNefern

MEMO:

Date: November 5, 2483

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

Mr. Fitzhugh,

I am very displeased to find a repair bill waiting for me this morning for 2400 cr. to repair a large hole burned in the wall of the Town Jail. How did this happen?

Berch FlargNefern

MEMO:

Date: November 5, 2483

FROM: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

Dear Mr. NargFlerfern,

I do apologize for the damage to the jail cell. I'm afraid this one's on me.

Last night, Deputy F-7 and I made our first arrest. We received a report of a drunken Plutonian causing a disturbance at Zorth's Watering Hole. I admit I was quite nervous about handling this, but it proved to be an easy arrest. The Plutonian promised to come quietly as long as he was allowed to bring his pet lizard with him. This was a two-foot-long scaled beast with three legs that is also native to Pluto. I did not know until this morning that these lizards are able to spit out a very corrosive acid. Hence, the yard-wide hole in the jail cell.

To give him his proper due, I think Deputy F-7 tried to warn me. But, as I have repeatedly pointed out, his A.I. has deteriorated and he sometimes has trouble finding the correct words to express what he's trying to say. He kept mumbling "Reptile spit! Reptile spit!" over and over again. I had no idea what he was trying to tell me at the time and simply discounted it.

I accept full responsibility to the damage to the jail cell. If you feel this makes me unqualified for my current job, I will be happy to use my severance pay to leave town.

If you don't fire me, though, can you at least approve a requisition for fresh power packs for the Sheriff's blaster pistol? I realize that this not Town Clerk equipment, but I really, really need to be able to practice with the thing as much as possible. That will inevitably use up power packs.

Yours Truly,

Algernon Fitzhugh

MEMO:

Date: November 5, 2483

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

Mr. Fitzhugh,

There is no need to go to extremes. Though I am displeased about the repair bill, I am fully confident that you can learn from your mistakes and will be able to carry your duties without undue monetary expense in the future. There is no need to discuss severance pay.

As for the power packs, perhaps you can dry fire the blaster pistol when you are practicing. With a little forethought, it is always possible to save money. In any case, I am unable to approve a request to replace equipment outside your own department.

In future memos, please take care to spell my name correctly. The “FL” comes at the beginning of the name, not in the middle.

Yours Truly,

Berch FlargNefern

EDITORIAL FROM THE *ARES LANDING OBSERVER*:

DATE: November 6, 2483

Well, our new Sheriff (who is apparently not the Sheriff) has successfully made his first arrest and—even more astonishing—he’s still alive. In fact, the crime rate in Ares Landing has been relatively low these last few weeks. The Finnigan gang seems to be keeping quiet at the moment. Perhaps they are on vacation. I doubt our new Not-The-Sheriff has them quivering in fear.

At any rate, it’s only two days until the next payday for town employees. It seems that anyone who took those odds and bet on Mr. Fitzhugh’s survival might actually clean up.

LETTER FROM ALGERNON FITZHUGH TO LAURA INGMAR

Date: November 7, 2483

Miss Ingmar,

We met briefly at the Town council meeting last night. I must say I was very impressed with your argument that funds be allotted to allow your second grade class to visit the Interplanetary Museum at Diemos Town. I’ve only been in town a short time, but I didn’t think anyone could squeeze money out of the Comptroller like you did.

I wonder if you might be willing to join me for lunch one day soon. I will try to make the time to meet you on any day that is convenient for you, though I am very busy. In addition to my job duties, I recently discovered a stash of digital training films in a storage closet in the Sheriff’s office. They have titles like *High Plains Drifter*, *True Grit* & *Rio Bravo* and seem to be recreations of law enforcement techniques from Old Earth that I might be able to incorporate into my own job.

Yours Truly,

Algernon Fitzhugh

EDITORIAL FROM THE *ARES LANDING OBSERVER*:

DATE: November 18, 2483

Good Heavens! In a startling development in the career of Not-The-Sheriff Fitzhugh, he apparently killed Marvin Finnegan in a shootout at Zorth's Watering Hole last night. Fortuitously, this reporter was on hand when this incident occurred.

What happened was this:  Mr. Fitzhugh was told that Marvin was at the saloon. Marvin is a known criminal and has several outstanding warrants against him for assault, attempted murder and armed robbery. Though it was quite obvious that Mr. Fitzhugh was very nervous when he entered the saloon, it is to his credit that he and his badly limping deputy robot had lost very little time in arriving to serve the warrants. Mr. Fitzhugh's blaster was in a holster hanging low at his hip.

What follows is not clear. Many witnesses believe that Mr. Fitzhugh reacted with unexpected competence when Marvin tried to shoot him. Mr. Fitzhugh dropped to the floor and returned fire, slicing the chain of a large chandelier with a well-placed blaster bolt. The chandelier crashed down on top of the unfortunate Marvin.

This reporter is less inclined to credit our Not-The-Sheriff with competence, as I am sure I heard Mr. Fitzhugh mutter "I tripped… I didn't… didn't mean…" before pulling himself together after the shooting was over.

LETTER FROM GRAYSON FINNEGAN TO HELMSLEY FINNEGAN

DATE: November 30, 2483

Helms,

Tough news about Marvin, but the kid was always an idiot and was bound to get himself killed sooner or later.

In fact, that Sheriff or whatever he is might have done me a favor. Marvin couldn't pour pee out of his boot without instructions written on the bottom and we're actually well-rid of him.

But family is family and I suppose I do need to get around to killing this Fitzhugh guy when I can. Right now, though, Mercenary work for the Council of Annoyed Nobles is paying well. It looks like Ares Landing will continue to get a break from us for a few more months at least. Raiding the Emperor's caravans and having legal permission from the Council to do so is too profitable and too much fun. I'm not going to worry about that piss-ant town or killing that Sheriff (or whatever he is) until the caravans start running down there again next summer.

Until then, lie low. You aren't quite the idiot Marvin was and I don't want you getting killed or arrested.

Grayson

MEMO:

Date: December 16, 2483

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

Mr. Fitzhugh,

In regards to your request to recompence you for medical expenses:

After checking with Lars Andersson, I find that regulations do require the town to cover those expenses.  I am uncertain, though, how you ended up with second degree burns on your chest. Was this really a work related injury? Please provide details so that I can complete the requisite paperwork.

In future communications with me, please take care to spell my name correctly. The first syllable is Flarg, not Florg.

Berch FlargNefern

EDITORIAL FROM THE *ARES LANDING OBSERVER*:

DATE: December 17, 2483

Many of our readers are curious about the details of the injury recently inflicted on our Not-The-Sheriff. It seems that Mr. Fitzhugh and Deputy F-7 encountered two men attempting to rob the Ares Credit Union two days ago. There was an exchange of shots before the criminals surrendered. During that exchange, a blaster bolt struck Mr. Fitzhugh full in the chest.

Extraordinarily, Mr. Fitzhugh survived. He later told this reporter that he had learned a “trick” from a training video with the odd title of *A Fistful of Dollars*. This trick consisted of putting a metal plate underneath his shirt for added protection.

This reporter doubts the efficacy of this tactic, but… well, it worked. Though heat convection from the blaster bolt left him with a nasty burn, he survived. The robbers, stunned by this, surrendered immediately.

Perhaps it is time to re-evaluate Not-The-Sheriff Fitzhugh.

LETTER FROM ALGERNON FITZHUGH TO LAURA INGMAR

Date: December 28, 2483

Dear Miss Ingmar,

Thank you for the Get Well card signed by both yourself and your students. The injury is healing quite rapidly now that the Town has paid for the anti-burn cream.

I wonder if you might be willing to meet me for lunch one day soon.

With respect,

Algernon Fitzhugh

LETTER FROM AAARRRGGGH!# ZORTH TO LLLIIISSTTHHRRR## ZORTH

DATE: February 11, 2484

Uncle LLLIIISSTTHHRRR##,

May the Slurge continue to Run Freely Through Your Life

I had written you of the months of relative quiet we have had in the human settlement of Ares Landing, allowing me to operate my Alcoholic Recreation Facility with comfortable profit. Other than severe damage to a chandelier last November (for which the Town Comptroller—may the Slurge Curse Him For All Eternity—still refuses to provide compensation), we continue to make money. I will continue to send home money each cycle and earnestly request you continue to invest it in shares of the next Cloud Seed crop.

Though I had my doubts about the efficiency of the Town Clerk, I must say that the Slurge seems to be blessing him. Last night, he entered my establishment and arrested two men who had jumped a Power Crystal claim outside town and severely wounded the legal owner of that claim. Using a tactic he told me was learned and slightly modified from a training video titled *El Dorado*, he had instructed Robot Deputy F-7 to enter the saloon from the rear door in a very noisy fashion. This distracted the two criminals and allowed Clerk Fitzhugh to—as humans apparently phrase it—“get the drop” on them. Clerk Fitzhugh instructed them to “Reach for Neptune,” a phrase many of my customers later said sounded very stupid. I’m afraid Robot Deputy F-7 increased the stupidity factor by pointing out the exact direction in which Neptune lies from the current position of Mars and forcing the criminals to hold up their hands at a 58.3 degree angle.

But despite this moment of Earth silliness, Clerk Fitzhugh was able to arrest the criminals without serious incident. I must admit I am impressed.

May the Slurge continue to bless you, your wife &RRTSSIIIUU@ and your young daughter YYY*&RRTTTHHHLL.

Yours in Slurge,

AAARRRGGGH!#

MEMO:

Date: March 16, 2484

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

Mr. Fitzhugh,

The need to repeatedly explain your situation to me is getting tiresome. Once again, you DO NOT have the authority to requisition equipment for the Sheriff's office. A telepathic protection headband is clearly designated as a part of the Sheriff's office, therefore I must once again turn down your request.

Frankly, I'm not sure why such a piece of equipment is needed at all by any department. It is not my job to waste money on frivolities.

In the future, please take care to spell my name correctly. It is "gN," not "Ng."

Yours Truly,

Berch FlargNefern

MEMO:

Date: March 16, 2484

FROM: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

Dear Mr. FlargNorfen,

In regards to the need for a telepathic protection headband:

Last night, Deputy F-7 and I arrested a Venusian who had been cheating at cards.  As you may know, some Venusians have telepathic abilities and this being also carried a device that blocked out the telepathy suppressors that Zorth has installed in his saloon.

The Venusian was cleaning up on poker by reading the minds of the other players. Unfortunately for him, one of the bartenders on duty is from Io, a race that has minor telepathic abilities of their own and he picked up on what was happening. He gave me a call and I went over with F-7 to make the arrest.

The Venusian nearly got away with telepathic trickery, making himself appear about five feet to the left of where he actually was. I must have looked absurd when I tried to tackle him and fell flat on my face instead. F-7, fortunately, was immune to mental tricks. To his credit, he did try to warn me, but once again was not able to find the right words. He simply yelled “Towards Crimson! Towards Crimson!” because—as far as I can figure out—a redheaded Earth woman working as a waitress was standing near the Venusian.

F-7 then showed some initiative by picking up a table and using it to knock the Venusian unconscious. I’m afraid you might be getting a claim from Zorth to pay for the table.

So, as you can see, a telepathic protection headband would have been very useful. I realize, though, that it is Sheriff's department equipment. Perhaps we can find a justification for moving it to the Approved Equipment List of the Town Clerk? It could help block out telepathic distractions while I'm tabulating the tariff collections for the month.

Yours Truly,

Algernon Fitzhugh

MEMO:

Date: March 16, 2484

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

Really, Mr. Fitzhugh. That justification for buying the Town Clerk a telepathic protection headband is one of the weakest I've ever heard in nearly 400 Earth years as a Comptroller! Please keep in mind that I take my responsibilities *very* seriously and always try to carry them out in an ethically sound manner.

And please be careful about damaging public property. The town budget is not bottomless.

In the future, please take care to spell my name correctly. The latter half of the name is "Nefern," not "Norfen."

Yours Truly,

Berch FlargNefern

EDITORIAL FROM THE *ARES LANDING OBSERVER*:

DATE: March 30, 2484

This reporter admits he had his doubts about Not-The-Sheriff Fitzhugh last October, but he continues to perform his duties as both Clerk and Law Enforcement official with reasonable competence. He is regularly making arrests and the crime rate continues to remain low. Those training videos he watches really seem to be paying off.

Although it must be remembered that the Finnegan gang, with the exception of the late and unlamented Marvin, has not put in an appearance in our area for months.

LETTER FROM ALGERNON FITZHUGH TO LAURA INGMAR

Date: April 7, 2484

Dear Miss Ingmar,

Having finished up the last of the accounting for the last fiscal year and with the criminal element in town remaining quiet, I wonder if you would finally consent to meet me for lunch one day soon?

MEMO:

Date: April 12, 2484

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

Mr. Fitzhugh,

I find myself inundated with requisitions from you and requests for compensation from private citizens! Please explain why an oxygen mask and heated suit are necessary for the TOWN CLERK (as I'm sure I need not remind you that you don't have the authority to requisition items for the SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT). Please explain why I am getting a request to compensate a local rancher for the cost of seven dead Mirots? I have an uncomfortable feeling that these are somehow related.

Berch FlargNefern

MEMO:

Date: April 12, 2484

FROM: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

Dear Mr. FlurgNefurn,

Yes, they are related. You may recall that Mr. Clancy, who owns a large ranch outside town (but within established town limits) on which he raises the smaller twelve-legged Mirots that are raised as meat animals rather than pulling merchant wagons in the trade caravans. You may or may not know that Mr. Clancy recently employed a half-dozen Lycan Men from Triton to work on his ranch.

The Lycan Men are hard-workers, but they are also new immigrants to Mars. No one, including Mr. Clancy, knew that once per Saturnian year, the Lycan Men turn feral and become very dangerous to anyone else around them.  Two nights ago, they began rampaging.

I would like to remind you at this point that the winter weather this year is still lingering and a Martian night in this weather is

dangerously cold for humans. Also, this time of year the oxygen content in the atmosphere drops along with the temperature. Deputy F-7 and I had to respond to Mr. Clancy's call for help at 2 am in the morning. Without a heated suit and oxygen mask, I was very uncomfortable and gasping for breath much of the time.

As for the dead Mirots, Mr. Clancy is not requesting payment for the nine Mirots killed by the Lycan Men during their rampage. But F-7 and I were forced kill seven other Mirots to create a trail of blood and lure the Lycan Men into a ravine, where we were able to keep them trapped until their Rampage Time was done. I know how annoyed you get when private property is damaged while we perform our town duties, but there was really no choice.

Mr. Flargnagurn, I know heated suits and oxygen masks are designated as Sheriff's Department equipment, but I really need equipment like this if I am going to perform Law Enforcement duties. I realize you are not human, but is there any chance you can show a little humanity in this case?

Yours Truly,

Algernon Fitzhugh

MEMO:

Date: April 12, 2484

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

Mr. Fitzhugh,

Humanity, or lack thereof, is not the issue. We have a shared duty to balance the books of Ares Landing properly and your constant harping against bureaucratic realities does not help matters.

In the future, please take care to spell my name correctly. It is… oh, never mind!

Berch *FlargNefern*

EDITORIAL FROM THE *ARES LANDING OBSERVER*:

DATE: May 3, 2484

It is now this reporter’s opinion that Not-The-Sheriff Fitzhugh has grown into his job. The town populace is coming to trust him more and more as well. Today, at Zorth’s Watering Hole, I discovered that the odds against him living through the year are down to 15 to 1.

MEMO:

Date: May 9, 2484

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

Mr. Fitzhugh,

I’m sorry, but I completely fail to see how infrared goggles qualify as equipment needed by the Town Clerk. Requisition denied.

Berch FlargNefern

MEMO:

Date: May 9, 2484

FROM: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

Mr. FlarfNegern,

I nearly got killed yesterday because I didn’t have infrared goggles, so you will excuse me if I now consider them a necessity.

A thief made off with Zorth's daily receipts by using an invisibility shield to hide his actions. F-7 theoretically has infrared vision built into his eye lenses, but that yet another item that no longer works because I don't have the funds to have him properly repaired.

Fortunately, we were able to borrow a Toby Monkey from Mr. Clancy. As you may know, Toby Monkeys have sensitive noses and are excellent trackers. The little guy was able to put us on the trail of the thief despite the invisibility shield.

But tracking him isn't the same as *seeing* him. I ended up in a desperate struggle with the thief on the edge of the cliff at Fineman Canyon. None of the training videos I watched had provided me with a single clue about how to subdue an invisible man and it was only pure luck that I managed to knock him unconscious with the butt of my blaster pistol.

Oh, I'm afraid the poor Toby Monkey was kicked over the cliff during the struggle. Be forewarned that Mr. Clancy plans to bill the city for him.

So I once again appeal to you to approve my requisition for equipment I really, really need.

Yours Truly,

Algernon Fitzhugh

MEMO:

Date: May 9, 2484

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

Mr. Fitzhugh,

Is it really the best use of our time (for which, I remind you, the town pays us) to constantly trade these ultimately useless memos with each other? Please accept that certain equipment is firmly

and unequivocally designated for the Sheriff’s Department and that, though you do perform Law Enforcement duties, you are NOT the Sheriff. How hard is this to understand?

In the future, please take care to spell my name correctly. It is “FlargNefern,” not “FlarfNegern.”

Berch FlargNefern

LETTER FROM GRAYSON FINNEGAN TO HELMSLEY FINNEGAN

DATE: June 1, 2484

Helms,

Well, the Nobles signed a peace treaty with the Emperor, so we’re out of a job up here. We’ll be heading south, so gather up anyone down there who would like to see some action. The caravans will be coming to Ares Landing in a few weeks, so it’s time to get ready to raise some hell.

Don’t worry. I haven’t forgotten the Sheriff and what he did to that idiot Marvin. Killing him is first on the agenda.

Grayson

LETTER FROM ALGERNON FITZHUGH TO LAURA INGMAR

Date: June 2, 2484

Dear Miss Ingmar,

There seems to be a lull before the caravans begin arriving and I know that school ended for summer vacation last week. I wonder if you might consent to have lunch with me one day this week?

MEMO:

Date: June 5, 2484

FROM: Bertram Lonepenny

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

Clerk Fitzhugh,

I wanted to let you know that a small caravan arrived in town early bringing a shipment of power crystals I have bought. These crystals are still in their raw form, so there is a chance of an explosion if they are mishandled. I have rented one of the two small warehouses owned by Mr. Clancy just outside of the town. That’s a pretty isolated spot, so the town should be safe in the unlikely event there is an accident. I thought I should let you know about it, though. You know, just in case something happens.

MEMO:

Date: June 7, 2484

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

Mr. Fitzhugh,

When I arrived at my computer to work this morning, I found a bill for $14,000 cr. for damage to a warehouse owned by Mr. Clancy. He indicates the damage was the result of Law Enforcement activity. Please explain this immediately.

Berch FlargNefern

MEMO:

Date: June 7, 2484

FROM: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

Mr. LarfNefern,

I’m afraid there was unavoidable collateral damage, but the good news is that the town of Ares Landing need not fear the depravations of the Finnegan gang any longer.

The gang apparently arrived in the area a few days ago and it seems they were plotting my death in retribution for the death of Marvin Finnegan last November. They actually kidnapped Miss Ingmar, the second grade school teacher, in order to lure me to them by threatening her. The gang was holding her inside one of Mr. Clancy’s warehouses just outside of town.

Well, I really have to commend Deputy F-7, who was able to wrench open a part of the wall in the rear of the warehouse and carry Miss Ingmar to safety. After that, I recalled that some raw power crystals were stored in the neighboring warehouse. Using a tactic I remembered from the training video *Rio Bravo*, I tossed the power crystals against the wall of the warehouse in which the Finnegan gang was still holed up. I then began to detonate them with well-placed blaster shots. (As a side note, all that dry firing to

practice with the blaster was surprisingly effective.) Within a few minutes, Grayson Finnegan and his gang were forced to surrender.

Oh, I guess one of our local merchants, Mr. Betram Lonepenny, will be billing the city for the power crystals. But considering the money we save now that the caravans will be free from the worst of outlaw attacks?

Yours Truly,

Algernon Fitzhugh

MEMO:

Date: June 7, 2484

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

Mr. Fitzhugh,

I must admit you do make a good point about money saved in the future. I hope this means you are adopting a more reasonable budgetary point-of-view and will no longer be filing unreasonable requisition requests with my office.

In the future, please take care to spell my name correctly. The first syllable is ‘Flarg,” not “Larf.”

LETTER FROM LAURA INGMAR TO ALGERNON FITZHUGH

DATE: June 8, 2484

Mr. Fitzhugh,

I wonder if you would consent to meet me for lunch this week at a date most convenient for you?

Miss Ingmar

MEMO:

Date: August 23, 2568

FROM: Berch FlargNefern, Town Comptroller (Town of Ares Landing)

TO: Algnernon Fitzhugh III, Town Clerk (Town of Ares Landing)

Mr. Fitzhugh,

I have reminded you on countless occasions—just as I reminded both your grandfather and your father on other countless occasions—you are the Town Clerk and not the Sheriff. Despite your job including the same Law Enforcement duties it has for the last 85 years, you are not authorized to requisition equipment designated for the Sheriff's Department. I must refuse your request for new power packs for the blaster pistols. I remind you that your grandfather became quite proficient with a pistol by dry firing during his practice sessions, so I know it can be done.

I will, though, agree to replace that squeaky chair in the Clerk's office. The new ergonomic regulations put into effect by the Colonial Authorities leave me with no choice. This does mean you'll have to go easy on printer's ink for the time being.

In the future, please take care to spell my name properly. The last syllable is "fern," not the four-letter word you used.